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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

Letter dated 8 November 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith, in the English and Spanish versions, the conclusions, decisions and declarations which the Latin American Council of the Latin American Economic System (SELA) adopted at its nineteenth ordinary ministerial meeting held at Caracas, from 25 to 29 October 1993 (see annex).

I request you to have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 12, 28, 31, 50, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 99, 100, 104 and 109.

(Signed) Pedro BLANDINO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative and
Chairman of the Latin American
Group for November

CONCLUSIONS BY THE COUNCIL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1993-1994 WORK PROGRAMME

1. ANALYSIS OF LONG-TERM SCENARIOS

After examining the document on long-term perspectives prepared by the Permanent Secretariat ("Scenarios of World Change", SP/CL/XIX.O/DT No. 13), the Latin American Council agreed that SELA should contribute to the formulation of forward-looking global external economic action strategies for the region in order to enable timely and appropriate action to be taken in response to the new processes under way in the global system. In that regard, it requested the Permanent Secretariat: i) with the support of other institutions in the region, to establish contacts and exchanges and conduct studies with international research centres specializing in that field, in order to enable the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and their centres and institutions to become fully informed and participate in that work; ii) to continue, on a regular basis, with the strengthening and updating of studies on the future evolution of the global system and the region's possibilities for action within it, and iii) for that purpose, to hold in the course of 1994 an expert meeting to be attended by government officials and representatives of the academic and private business sectors.

2. AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Latin American Council noted with satisfaction the initiatives proposed by the Permanent Secretariat in the "Agenda for Development," a document presented at the Third Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government held in San Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, in July 1993. This document contains proposals which would allow the formulation and support of a position of the countries of the region, as well as other developing countries, on the approach to be taken to this important topic, currently under consideration by the United Nations General Assembly in response to an initiative put forward by the Group of 77.

3. DEVELOPMENT FINANCING AND EXTERNAL DEBT

The uncertainty surrounding the prospects of obtaining external financing for the region's development was underlined, as was the need to adopt a less optimistic attitude in that respect in view of the possibility of a new external financing crisis in the medium term. In that connection, emphasis was placed on the advisability of strengthening analyses on the prospects of capital flows toward the region. Likewise, stress was placed on the importance of adopting or strengthening adequate macroeconomic policies and carrying out joint actions in such areas as the promotion of foreign investments and the exchange of experience on the opening-up of financial sectors.

The Council also endorsed the proposal put forward in the "Agenda for Development" to conduct an analysis of the current situation and future prospects with regard to Latin American and Caribbean relations with the Bretton Woods institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. That analysis would be presented at the Meeting of Governors from Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain and the Philippines, to be held in September 1994.

4. 1995 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

In view of the importance that all SELA Member States attach to social development and the activities which SELA is already carrying out in this respect, it was agreed that the Permanent Secretariat should promote and actively collaborate, together with ECLAC, in the preparation of the region's position at the 1995 Social Development Summit. In that connection, it was considered that SELA should prepare studies on the optimization of social expenditure.

5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The Council approved the execution of four activities in 1994 to assist Member States in participating in international trade negotiations:

a) Preparation of a compendium of the trade barriers faced by Latin American and Caribbean exports in the markets of industrialized countries;

b) Study of the effects of greater Latin American and Caribbean trade openness on the economies of the industrialized countries as regards job opportunities and exports;

c) Analysis of support measures implemented by industrialized countries and their effect on the countries of the region and on international trade relations as a whole, and

d) The holding of workshops on rules of origin.

The Council also gave instructions for the execution of studies and the holding of seminars and meetings on the new topics on the international trade agenda.

In addition, the Council requested that the Permanent Secretariat, with the support of LATINTRADE, prepare an evaluation of the results of the Uruguay Round concerning market access of Latin America and the Caribbean in respect of the following items:

a) the offers made by the countries of the region at the Uruguay Round;

b) the concessions offered by the principal developed countries concerning products of interest to Latin America and the Caribbean;

c) the erosion of GSP due to the offers made by developed countries;

d) the increase in imports by Latin America and the Caribbean as a result of the Uruguay Round.

6. ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

In this respect, the Permanent Secretariat was urged to proceed with the implementation of the Work Programme provided for in Item II.5 of document DT No. 8, "Latin American and Caribbean Economic Relations: Report and Action Proposals of the Economic Relations Division", with the modifications agreed at the meeting, including the continuation of the work on the economic/strategic map of economic relations between the United States and the region.

7. RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

As the first phase of the "Project on the Regionalization of the EC Productive Space" ends in February 1994, the Latin American Council instructed the Permanent Secretariat, in co-operation with other regional, international and EC entities, to continue with steps to obtain the support of financial and co-operation organizations for carrying out the second stage of the Project. That stage consists of the establishment of contacts between Latin American and Caribbean entrepreneurs and their counterparts in the various European regions in order to maximize benefits in the areas of investment, technology and trade. The Council also approved the steps being taken by the Secretariat for the implementation of the second stage of the "EC-SELA Biotechnology Programme".

8. RELATIONS WITH JAPAN AND THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

The Latin American Council considered the Permanent Secretariat's efforts in connection with the organization of a medium-term Work Programme with Japan aimed at strengthening the region's economic relations with that country to be very appropriate. In that respect, the Permanent Secretariat was requested to contact Japanese public and private institutions in order to further the specific actions contemplated in that Programme. The Council also reiterated its interest in measures by the Secretariat to promote the development of links with Chinese and Southeast Asian public and private institutions in order to improve Member States' information and capacity of analysis with regard to the economic processes in that region.

9. REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Emphasis was placed on the importance of promoting the exchange of information and experience among those responsible for deciding trade policy in the Latin American and Caribbean countries, as a means of facilitating the gradual convergence of the respective instruments in this field and the creation of a common economic space in the region. To this end, the Latin American Council decided to recommend that the relevant bodies of ALADI and ECLAC consider the SELA Permanent Secretariat's proposal for the holding of a meeting to be attended by those responsible for trade policy in the 27 SELA Member States and representatives of the various integration processes and schemes existing in the region, with technical support from SELA, ECLAC and other institutions such as LATINTRADE. At this meeting, an analysis of the characteristics of international trade and its close ties to regional trade would also be analysed.

Emphasis was placed on the importance, in all aspects of the integration process, of the participation of all the economic agents, and in that respect support was given to the holding of meetings and the promotion of activities aimed in particular at bringing together the private sector, workers and universities.

The Council also stressed the importance of disseminating information on integration through the "Communication for Integration" project being organized by SELA and the Office of the UNESCO Regional Communications Advisor for Latin America.

10. REGIONAL FORUM ON INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND THE FIFTH UNIDO GENERAL CONFERENCE

In view of the relevance and importance of this topic, the SELA Member States decided that the first meeting of the Regional Forum on Industrial Policy, the establishment of which was agreed at the Regional Conference on Industrialization, should be held during the first half of 1994, and the Permanent Secretariat was requested to carry out the necessary preparatory activities to that end. The Council stated that this initiative would broaden the dialogue between those involved in the process of industrialization and technological development, by facilitating co-ordination and co-operation in defence of the region's interests. The Brazilian delegation reiterated its offer to host the first meeting of the Regional Forum on Industrial Policy, and this proposal was accepted with satisfaction by the Council.

The Council endorsed the Final Document of the Regional Consultation and Co-ordination Meeting of UNIDO, held from 6 to 8 October 1993, which contained a contribution to the establishment of a Latin American and Caribbean position on the new criteria guiding UNIDO's activities which were to be defined at the Fifth UNIDO General Conference.

11. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Permanent Secretariat was requested, in consultation with the governments and institutions concerned, to organize the Fourth Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Forum on Intellectual Property in the first four months of 1994.

12. CARIBBEAN/LATIN AMERICAN PROGRAMME

The Latin American Council congratulated the SELA Permanent Secretariat on its implementation, since 1992, of a programme aimed at stimulating Caribbean-Latin American relations in areas for which SELA is responsible. The Latin American Council also noted with satisfaction the recent announcement by UNDP that it would give its backing to the Programme, since that would make it possible to expand the Programme's activities.

13. ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

SELA should strive to ensure a co-ordinated Latin American and Caribbean position in the activities of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. At that forum, mechanisms to begin the evaluation of Agenda 21 were established, and decisions were adopted --such as those regarding the Multi-year Thematic Work Programme or the holding of meetings between sessions-- which complemented national efforts aimed at putting sustainable development into practice.

14. ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS

The Council considered that the holding of meetings to exchange experiences and technical assistance on priority economic and social issues was highly relevant in the context of the technical support provided by SELA to strengthen the negotiating capacity of Member States.

In that regard, the Council supported the holding of technical meetings in 1994, particularly on relations with multilateral financial institutions and the prospects for external financing; the use of international bidding; social development and its financing; investment promotion; negotiations with the Paris Club; export promotion, and privatization.

15. ACTION COMMITTEES AND PERMANENT BODIES

The Permanent Secretariat was instructed to continue assisting the Action Committees and Permanent Bodies in the pursuit of their objectives, while at the same time promoting greater interrelation of co-operation activities being carried on in the various subregions in similar or related fields. It was agreed that the Member States should send the Permanent Secretariat their comments on document DT 17, "Regional Co-operation within the framework of

SELA: Elements for innovative reflection", with a view to proceeding with the corresponding initiatives.

16. PLACE AND DATE OF THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL

The Latin American Council thanked the Government of Mexico for its offer to host its XX Regular Meeting in Mexico City during the first semester of 1994, if possible in May, in accordance with the proposal of the Mexican Delegation and subject to consultation.

DECISION No. 343

SUPPORT BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER BODIES FOR THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT OF SELA

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

HAVING SEEN:

Decision No. 336

WHEREAS:

The 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th and 47th United Nations General Assemblies adopted resolutions 43/4, 44/4, 45/5, 46/6 and 47/7, respectively, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System;

The UNDP has contributed to the activities entrusted by the Member States of SELA to the Permanent Secretariat, both through the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and through the Special TCDC Unit;

Such organizations and bodies as UNESCO, UNIDO, WIPO, UNCTAD, the European Community and the Spanish Patent and Trade Mark Office have given ongoing support to the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in the various areas of work entrusted to it;

DECIDES:

Article 1.- To express its appreciation to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the contribution it has been making to the Permanent Secretariat of SELA through Project RLA/92/008 and the Special TLDC Unit, and its hope that this co-operation may be extended in the future.

Article 2.- To express its appreciation to UNESCO, UNIDO, WIPO, UNCTAD, the European Community and the Spanish Patent and Trade Mark Office for their constant support of the Permanent Secretariat in matters of common interest to the region.

Article 3.- To ask the above-mentioned institutions to continuing supporting the activities carried out within SELA in its capacity as a body representing the interests of all the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

DECISION No. 344

TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (TCDC)

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

WHEREAS:

International Technical Co-operation in general, and TCDC in particular, are instruments in support of the Member States' national development and foreign policy plans, programmes and projects;

There is a gradual decline in international co-operation, particularly that destined to Latin America and the Caribbean;

There is a growing conditionality in negotiations regarding agreements concerning co-operation programmes, particularly economic conditionalities, those involving development models, those of a political nature and those concerning specific sectorial problems;

The co-operation policy favours a sustainable development model which stresses the development of human resources, development management, including private enterprise, by viewing co-operation as a complement of internal development endeavours;

As a consequence of the foregoing, it is to be noted that co-operation currently seeks to combine various modalities, instruments and actors, thus making our countries' participation in international co-operation more complex;

DECIDES:

Article 1.- To reiterate the importance of International Technical Co-operation within the context of the current international situation. For this purpose it will be necessary:

To select the proper national, institutional and financial counterparts in order to obtain effective and efficient execution of development programmes with the support of international co-operation;

To improve the mechanisms whereby various national actors take part in the international co-operation programmes, inter alia the non-governmental organizations, joint interest co-operation networks, the private sector, universities and scientific and technical institutions, etc., in accordance with the legislation in force in each country;

/...

To improve the national co-operation management systems; co-ordinating stable and coherent management systems; creating professional teams for the co-operation systems; comparing the characteristics of the various management systems in the countries in the region;

To insist on the need not only to grant priority to the criterion of excellence in selecting co-operation projects, but also to take into account the criterion of relevance, in order to broach the most pressing national problems;

To improve the systems for negotiating international co-operation, exchanging experiences with the various sources and, to this end, harmonizing the programming methodologies by source of co-operation, project design, monitoring of the programmes adopted and control and assessment of the projects executed;

To take into account the heterogeneity found within the Latin American and Caribbean region for purposes of eligibility to receive co-operation; on this basis it will be necessary to draw up policies enabling the countries in the region not only to continue participating in the international co-operation system, but also to benefit from it.

Article 2.- To instruct the Permanent Secretariat to convene a meeting to be held at SELA headquarters, at the latest 60 days after the UNDP Administrator presents the relevant report to the Governing Council. The Permanent Secretariat is to prepare a document for said meeting, which will serve as a basis for the discussions on the methodology to be used in the distribution of the financial resources for the VI Cycle.

The Member Countries of SELA and the rest of the countries in the region will be invited to attend this meeting.

The countries participating in the meeting will draw up a document which will reflect the concerted position of our region as regards the VI Cycle.

The Permanent Secretariat will subsequently convene another meeting in New York, at a date closer to the meeting of the Governing Council, which is to decide on the distribution of the financial resources for the VI Cycle. The aim of the New York meeting is to update the countries of the region on the developments following the meeting to be held in Caracas.

Other issues to be dealt with in this meeting are those involved in the UNDP regional programme for the VI Cycle, as well as matters relating to national execution and supportive costs.

To request that in the distribution of the resources for costs in support of SAT 1 and SAT 2, UNDP take into account the high

percentage of national execution in the region and consequently provide it with larger amounts.

Article 3.- To urge the Member States to put into practice the following recommendations as regards the Regional TCDC Strategy:

a) As regards the institutional aspect of the Focal Points:

To continue supporting and improving the training of human resources involved in the management and administration of International Technical Co-operation. To this end, the Permanent Secretariat is instructed to promote the necessary co-ordination among entities currently providing training programmes, to achieve complementarity among them and maximise the number of people participating, assigning priority to the Caribbean and Central America.

To urge the Governments to provide support for strengthening the instruments for the implementation of TCDC insofar as juridical, financial and procedural matters are concerned.

b) As regards management capability:

To reaffirm the need to harmonize existing Technical Co-operation systems in the various countries in the region, the United Nations system (TCDC-INRES) and the Regional TCDC Supply and Demand Information System (INFOSELA), in order to ensure compatible criteria and avoid a duplication of efforts. To this end, the SELA Permanent Secretariat is instructed to draw up a specific proposal which will achieve the aforementioned objectives.

In this regard, the Permanent Secretariat is instructed to proceed with additional financial negotiations for the early launching of INFOSELA, taking advantage of the co-operation already offered by the United Nations Department of Development Support and Management Services and the International Organization for Migrations (IOM), which will also make it possible to create the Data Base on Professionals and Technicians for co-operation in the region.

To exchange information on experiences in various countries in the region for the purpose of harmonizing TCDC programming, negotiation, follow-up and evaluation methods. To this end, the SELA Permanent Secretariat is instructed to carry out a study to facilitate the implementation of a common methodology.

To foster the development of integrated projects in priority programmes in the countries and the region.

c) As regards funding:

To adjust the principle of sharing TCDC costs to the levels of development of the various countries, in order that the type of co-operation allow for joint implementation, thereby enabling the relatively less developed countries in the region to take part in programmes using this system of co-operation.

To implement support mechanisms for the obtention of financial resources as an actual national counterpart in international co-operation projects in general, and in TCDC in particular.

In order to make maximum use of the triangulation mechanism with industrialized countries and international organizations, the Permanent Secretariat is instructed to compile the existing necessary information for it to be made known to the Member States.

To create and/or strengthen TCDC Umbrella Projects with funds of the UNDP National Indicative Planning Figures and/or other financial resources.

Article 4.- To stress the progress made in launching the Convergence Programme and reaffirm the importance of beginning implementation of the regional projects specified in that Programme.

Article 5.- To reiterate to the Permanent Secretariat the need for the TCDC activities agreed upon within the framework of SELA to be carried out in close co-ordination with the National Focal Points, in order to avoid a dispersion of efforts and ensure the appropriate participation of the sector responsible for the subject in each country.

Article 6.- To instruct the Permanent Secretariat to compile the information and experience existing in the region regarding the incorporation of the private sector into the technical co-operation activities and make it known to the Member States.

In support of this task, the Permanent Secretariat is instructed to prepare, in co-ordination with ECLAC, a draft document destined to promote the exchange of experiences in policies and forms of linkage of the private sector with the public sector, in order to foster TCDC activities with the participation of the private sector. Said document will be circulated among the Member States before the end of the year for their consultation.

Article 7.- To take note of the signing of the Addendum to the Co-operation Agreement between the Permanent Secretariat and the IOM, in support of the mobilization of experts who pursue International Technical Co-operation activities.

Likewise, to request the IOM to continue negotiations with the governments interested, to conclude agreements similar to those

signed with several countries of the region, with a view to the implementation of co-operation activities.

Article 8.- To instruct the Permanent Secretariat to inform the UNDP Administrator of the SELA Member States' interest in having someone from the Latin American and Caribbean region appointed to the post of Director of the UNDP Special TCDC Unit, when the period of office of the present Director ends in early 1994.

Article 9.- To recommend that the Chairman of the Latin American Council, on behalf of Latin America and the Caribbean, make arrangements for the region to take part, within the limits of its possibilities, in the co-operation programmes initiated in favour of the development of Haiti, and for the incorporation of regional and international organizations.

In this respect, we reiterate the statement contained in the Haiti Declaration, adopted at the XVIII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council, and request that the Permanent Secretary, in consultation with the Member States, identify the possible elements of an effective co-operation programme for the development of Haiti.

Article 10.- To urge the Member States and International Organizations to give active support to the Permanent Secretariat in the quest for the necessary resources, in order to ensure the viability of the work plan contained in this decision.

Article 11.- On the occasion of the XV Anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action in September 1978, it is recommended that the Member States highlight this fact in the most suitable fashion, with particular reference to the progress made by the region in TCDC.

Article 12.- To thank the UNDP Special TCDC Unit for having supported the organization of the meetings of Directors of International Technical Co-operation and TCDC activities in the region and express the Forum's interest in the continuation of this support in the future.

DECISION No. 345

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

WHEREAS:

The International Co-operation financial resources to the Latin American and Caribbean region have been systematically decreased;

The region needs increased financial and technical support for co-operation programmes for development;

DECIDES:

To exhort International Organizations and Donor Countries of financial and technical resources directed to support international co-operation programmes for development, to assign a larger resource quota to the Latin American and Caribbean region, given the urgent need to increase the financing capacity for economic and social development.

DECLARATION ON THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The Heads of Delegation of the Member States, meeting in Caracas, Venezuela on 29 October 1993, in the framework of the XIX Latin American Council of SELA :

Reiterate to the Governments of Mexico, the United States and Canada their satisfaction at the progress being made on the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement;

Consider that the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement among Mexico, the United States and Canada will open up new opportunities for free trade and development throughout the hemisphere;

Express, moreover, their expectations that the participating countries will conclude the process for final approval of the Agreement and that the Agreement and its implementation will contribute to the liberalization of regional trade and to strengthening the multilateral trade system.

DECLARATION BY THE XIX REGULAR MEETING OF THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE URUGUAY ROUND OF MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

WHEREAS the countries of the region, with the support of the SELA Permanent Secretariat and the LATINTRADE Project, have been furthering an ongoing evaluation of the Uruguay Round, and

IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE to the Latin American and Caribbean countries that the negotiations should reach a successful culmination with the adoption of a global and balanced package of measures fully incorporating their interests, providing effective market access opportunities for their goods and services, and establishing a system of strengthened, effective and foreseeable rules for international trade;

REAFFIRMS Latin American and Caribbean full support for the Uruguay Round and the solid political will expressed at the highest level of the countries of the region, as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration adopted in Montevideo on 17 September 1993 and the Presidential Declaration adopted in Santiago, Chile, on 16 October 1993;

OBSERVES WITH CONCERN that, a mere 7 weeks before the deadline set by the Trade Negotiations Committee for the end of the negotiating process, instead of substantial progress, an attempt is being made to dilute the achievement of the goals of the Punta del Este Declaration as well as the commitments and disciplines set forth in the draft "Dunkel Final Act;"

DEMANDS the entire international community and, most especially, the highest political levels of the industrialized countries, for a multilateral conclusion of the Uruguay Round that will fully honour the commitments set forth in the Punta del Este Declaration and in the 1988 Mid-term Review Meeting in Montreal, on the basis of the Draft Final Act of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations proposed by Arthur Dunkel.

DECLARATION ON HAITI

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

RECALLING the international community's concern and the Declaration on Haiti adopted at its XVIII Meeting of the Latin American Council which calls for an intensification of efforts for a speedy institutional resolution of the situation which is causing serious socio-economic disruption in Haiti,

EXPRESSES full solidarity with the people of Haiti and grave concern at the absence of constitutionality in that country.

REQUESTS the Permanent Secretariat to monitor the evolution of the situation in Haiti and to be prepared, as soon as constitutionality is reestablished, to identify the possible elements of a program of co-operation which the organization could render to Haiti in order to help accelerate its socio-economic development.

DECLARATION ON THE EFFECTS OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION PROCESSES ON SMALL ECONOMIES IN THE REGION

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

WHEREAS the economies of the smaller countries of the Caribbean are in a special and vulnerable situation;

STRESSES the importance of taking into account the interests and particularities of the smaller countries of the region in the trade liberalization processes with industrialized countries.

DECLARATION ON THE SIGNING OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE TRRATY

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

EXPRESSES its satisfaction with the signing of the Protocol Amending the General Treaty on Economic Integration between the countries of Central America, signed in the city of Guatemala on 29 October 1993. This act is a demonstration of the political will of the countries to progress toward the region's integral development.